



July 2009

# Fireside

**Our Mission: To strengthen the international community of camps for children with cancer and thier families through networking, advocacy, education and other resources.**

## CAMP GOOD DAYS AND SPECIAL TIMES TO CELEBRATE 30 YEARS

Through out 2009, Camp Good Days and Special Times, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for children, adults, and families whose lives have been touched by cancer, will celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year...30 Years of Bringing Love to Life!

In 1979, Elizabeth "Teddi" Mervis was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor at the age of nine. Her father, Gary Mervis, traveled across the country to major medical centers seeking the best possible treatment for his daughter. He returned home without the answers he had been looking for and realized that it was not the craniotomy, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy that was causing Teddi the most pain, but it was the

loneliness of being the only child in her school and neighborhood dealing with cancer.

With the help and support of many friends and community members in Greater Rochester, New York, Gary founded Camp Good Days and Special Times, Inc., a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, to provide Teddi and other children with cancer the opportunity to come together in a residential camping experience, to be with the only ones who could truly understand what they were going through – other children with cancer.

Camp Good Days was the fourth organization of its kind in the United States and the first to be started by a lay person. Since its inception, Camp Good Days has served more than 41,000 campers from 22 states and 25 foreign countries. Camp Good Days maintains accreditation from the American Camp Association; and has been inducted into the Safety 1<sup>st</sup>



Hall of Fame by Markel Insurance Company.

Over the years, Camp Good Days has become one of the largest organizations of its kind, with many of the programs and services started there being used as models for other cancer treatment centers and organizations around the world. Today, Camp Good Days remains dedicated to improving the quality of life for children and families whose lives have been touched by cancer and other life threatening challenges, through residential camping experiences held at their own, beautiful Recreational Facility on Keuka Lake, as well as year-round, recreational and support activities and

events held across Upstate New York in Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, and the Southern Tier Region, for families who are facing life's toughest challenges. Camp Good Days also maintains a presence on the Internet at [www.campgooddays.org](http://www.campgooddays.org).

Camp Good Days provides programs and services for children with cancer; children with sickle cell anemia; children who have a parent or sibling battling cancer; children who have lost a parent or sibling to cancer; young adults (ages 18-29) dealing with cancer; women with cancer; and men with cancer.

With a small group of paid employees, Camp Good Days is a volunteer-based organization,



( Camp Good Days story continued on p. 2)



## ■ Camp Good Days and Special Times Continued

governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and relying on the dedication and service of thousands of volunteers to assist in the providing of programs and services.

So as not to place any additional financial burden on the families served, all of the programs and services provided by Camp Good Days are offered free of charge for the participants. This is only possible because of the support and generosity of so many individuals, businesses, and organizations, and the success of special fundraising events held throughout the year.

A variety of special

events to commemorate Camp Good Days' 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year will be held throughout 2009. Each of the existing special events, such as: The Finger Lakes International Wine Competition and Auction Dinner; the Tournament of Love Celebrity Scramble Golf Tournament; the Bill Coffey Memorial Golf Classic to benefit the Kids Adjusting Through Support Program at Camp Good Days; the Courage Bowl Football Game; and the Annual Joe Benet Memorial Kazoo Fest, will each include celebratory themes and elements. In celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Camp Good Days will host I Wouldn't

Have Missed It For The World, an up-close and personal concert / lecture with music legend, Ronnie Milsap, on Saturday, June 27, 2009, which would have been Teddi's birthday. Camp Good Days will also host a special 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunion Weekend at the Camp Good Days' Recreational Facility, the weekend of October 2-4, 2009, for those who were a part of the residential camping programs during the first 10 years.

While nothing at Camp Good Days will find a cure for cancer or other life threatening challenges, everything is done in an effort to create some good

days and special times for the children and families served. Camp Good Days is a celebration of life, with those who have learned to appreciate it the most...a place where courage knows no boundaries.

For more information about the many programs and services provided by Camp Good Days and Special Times; to learn about the many volunteer opportunities available; or to make a tax deductible donation, please call 585-624-5555 or 800-785-2135 or visit Camp Good Days at: [www.campgooddays.org](http://www.campgooddays.org).

## LEUCAN'S MASSAGE THERAPY

Leucan is an association that grew out of the junction of parents of cancer-stricken children and healthcare professionals. Since its foundation in 1978, its mission has been to enhance the well-being, healing and recovery of children with cancer and ensure support for their families.

One of Leucan's year-around services is massage therapy, with qualified massage therapists specially trained to help people with cancer.

In addition to medical treatment during hospitalization, children with cancer benefit from special massages to help them through the healing process. Unique to North America, Leucan's integrated massage therapy services are offered in Quebec's four pediatric oncology centres.

Leucan can also assign a massage therapist to a specific family for the entire duration of treatment. The massage therapist will meet with the family at their home and if not possible at its office. The whole family can have access to this service.

Leucan also runs this service in all its camps. The objectives are to enable parents to get rid of the tensions and stress they have accumulated during their child's hospitalization and treatments, as well as to recharge and return well grounded in order to continue their daily activities after the camp. The second objective is to enable children treated for cancer to keep the same energy through the week thanks to massage therapy. The third objective is to offer a privileged moment to siblings and to give a boost of energy to the volunteers taking care of the children.

Benefits of the massage therapy are considerable. As well as providing the sick children with some sense of well-being, it helps them relax and spark a chain reaction in their bodies. Some pain, particularly in the legs, as well as intestinal cramps and headaches, can thus be alleviated or reduced considerably. It also serves to bring about an energizing effect, improve immune functions, develop one's physical awareness, and invigorate mind and body.

For more information: [www.leucan.qc.ca](http://www.leucan.qc.ca) or [karina.carola@leucan.qc.ca](mailto:karina.carola@leucan.qc.ca).





## RE-MISSION VIDEO GAME OFFERED BY HOPELAB

The 2009 camp season is quickly approaching and HopeLab is thrilled to participate again this year by offering free copies of the Re-Mission video game to your campers.

For those of you not familiar with the game, Re-Mission uses “fun” and the power of video games as incentives for teens to

blast cancer, battle bacterial infections and manage side effects with weapons like chemo, radiation and antibiotics! Re-Mission is a great tool for teen and young adult patients who are in maintenance therapy and it may also be an excellent “take home” gift for your campers.

HopeLab will contact camps to offer

delivery of games free-of-charge for your summer sessions. Camp directors and campers can also go online at [www.re-mission.net](http://www.re-mission.net) to order free copies or download the game onto PC desktops or laptops.

On behalf of HopeLab and sponsors of our camp distribution program, The

Entertainment Software Foundation, we wish all of you dedicated and generous camp directors, a wonderfully exciting camping season in 2009! To learn more about Re-Mission and the non-profit organization HopeLab, visit us at [www.hopelab.org](http://www.hopelab.org).



*"Keep in mind...being a "presenter" does not mean you have all the answers... maybe it's your question..."*

## Camp Rap-A-Hope Offers Insight

Camp Rap-A-Hope just finished our week of Camp! It was, as I'm sure yours was or will be, AMAZING!! While at Camp I was reminded of all the things I brought back with me from COCA-I in Tempe that I was able to put in to place this Camp week. I also thought about the things I'd been able to pass along to other COCA-I camps that I hoped was found to be useful. The very reason we meet each year at conference was evident in my day to day journey throughout the week. Please stop for just a minute during your week... think on things you'd like to know and things you'd like to share with your COCA-I sister Camps. Your questions can be answered in a break out session that you facilitate... you do not have to have the answers...sometimes the question just needs to be asked or you can bring programs, risk management, dining hall... ideas that really worked well for you and share your knowledge. Only with help from each Camp can we learn how to be and do our best for our Campers. Please sign up now to be a presenter. Keep in mind...being a “presenter” does not mean you have all the answers...maybe it's your question...

Looking forward to having you in Mobile in November.

Riverview Renaissance, where rooms have been set aside at the rate of \$129. (Reservations 800-922-3298)

Melissa McNichol  
Executive Director Camp Rap-A-Hope

Susan Duffey  
Conference Chair (for RAH)

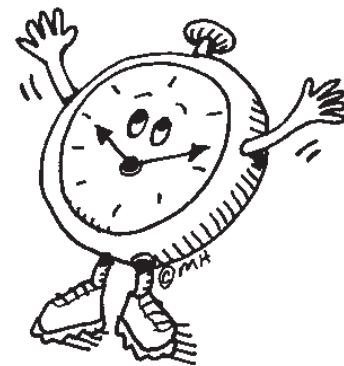


# Happy New Year!

No, it is not January 1<sup>st</sup> but for most of us it is the start of the summer camping season – A new year of staff and volunteers, a new year of new campers or ones who have grown taller than you from last year!! New programs or the reinvention of old ones....new memories and new stories!

As I visited my camp's staff training this summer, I looked out among those eager, warm, special people and I was excited! I told them that what they are about to embark upon this summer will be like no other experience they have ever had, one that few could relate too (except of course all of you!!) even if they are returning for a second or third summer – it's a new year!

I am wishing for all of you to have a safe and memorable summer filled with good weather, good food, good friendships and good times.



## The going's on of COCA-I

Some of you may be wondering what the COCA-I administration and board has been up to in the last 6 months so here's a few examples of some of the projects we have been working on...

- Website** – Launching in November a new look and new functions for our website.
- ACA Discussions** – The membership committee has been working with and dialoguing with the ACA about adopting the COCA-I guidelines as part of the ACA accreditation process
- Grant Proposals** – The fundraising committee has been sending out grant proposals to help cover costs of operating the organization. As well the fundraising committee has been reaching out to companies/ organizations that may want to display their goods at the conference in November.
- Conference Updates** – included in this edition will be information about the annual conference November 12-15 in Mobile Alabama. Melissa and Susan and the Rap-a-hope crew have been working hard to create an amazing conference for us. If you haven't already registered or decided on a session to present please consider doing so soon. We always have lots to learn from each other!
- Membership Incentives** – Looking at ways to provide more for you as COCA-I members. These include the Camp Journal Program . Simms McIvor has been extremely supportive of the COCA-I organization. We will continue to discuss with Simms McIvor about future commitments and products alternative to the camp journals. We have also been in discussion with Chris Thurber about offering on line training sessions for member camps at a reduced price.

Of course there are more projects that are being worked on, but a huge thank you to all of those who have been so helpful. Your commitment and hard work does not go unnoticed and is greatly appreciated! As always I welcome your comments and feedback!

## Moving on but not moving far...

For the past 4 ½ years COCA-I has relied on the dedication and administrative support of Slocum, Timm and Associates (S&T, Mark and Tony). The administrative contract is up for renewal this November and S&T have notified the board that they will not be pursuing a bid for renewal of their contract.

Both Mark and Tony have devoted much time on furthering the COCA-I organization. They have provided leadership and excellence in conference management and have provided consistency for the administrative side for COCA-I.

Although their role within COCA-I will be changing they both have assured me that they are committed to COCA-I and believe in the wonderful magic of oncology camping. We wish them continued success with their business and are extremely thankful for their amazing contribution to COCA-I. There will be more to add to this in the next few months!

COCA-I is now accepting Requests for Proposals of interested management companies or individuals. Please contact me for further information.



# Send in your Nominations NOW!

## Spirit of COCA-I Award

The Spirit of COCA-I Award recognizes outstanding dedication and commitment, on behalf of oncology camping, by an individual associated with a member camp of COCA-I International. This is someone who has made a significant difference in the success of your camp, someone who goes the extra miles to make camp an awesome place for the campers and staff. Anyone fulfilling this description is eligible for the nomination.

The award will be presented at the annual COCA-I International conference.

To complete the nomination form online by going to: [http://www.coca-intl.org/recognition/spirit\\_nomination.html](http://www.coca-intl.org/recognition/spirit_nomination.html). If you have further questions, please contact:

Amy Steinkuhl, Region 3 Representative  
c/o Indian Summer Camp  
528 Nottingham Pkwy  
Louisville, KY 40224  
or e-mail: [amy@kcp.uky.edu](mailto:amy@kcp.uky.edu)

## Showcase Your Camp!

Does your camp have the right stuff to be named “Best of Show”? If so, enter your camp organization in the “Best of Show” COCA Awards!

Awards will be given for the “Best of Show.”

Keep these things in mind:

- Video
- Fund Raising Event
- Brochure
- Camp Program or Activity
- Volunteer Recognition Activity
- Website
- Newsletter
- Camp T-Shirt
- Camp Photo

Go to [http://www.coca-intl.org/recognition/best\\_of\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.coca-intl.org/recognition/best_of_flyer.pdf) for more information and the application.

Entries due no later than November 1st, 2009.